

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A method for the differentiation of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) from irritable bowel disease (IBS) followed by distinguishing ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease from other gastrointestinal illnesses. This highly differential method first uses the presence of elevated lactoferrin as a marker of intestinal inflammation to differentiate IBD from IBS. Patients suspected of IBD are then analyzed for fecal anti-*Saccharomyces cerevisiae* antibodies (ASCA) as an indicator of Crohn's disease and fecal anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies (ANCA) as an indicator of ulcerative colitis. IBD patients are further monitored for intestinal inflammation using fecal lactoferrin to evaluate the effectiveness of medical therapy and to predict relapse. The apparatus comprises either a qualitative enzyme-linked immunoassay or other immunoassay that utilizes antibodies specific to human immunoglobins for the measurement of total endogenous lactoferrin, ASCA and ANCA in human feces. The method and apparatus can be used by healthcare providers to identify IBD and distinguish ulcerative colitis from Crohn's disease.